Chapter 299: Out of Control

After sparring again and again, "Fu Hua" eventually knelt on the ground, bending forward, completely doubting her own existence.

"This doesn't make any sense..."

"Maybe I've been eating too much lately, my body feels heavy..."

"Or have I gotten lazy in my training..."

"Logically, how could I possibly lose to someone else in martial arts..."

Fu Hua squatted down beside her, listening to all these muttered complaints, and couldn't help but show a doting smile. She reached out and gently ruffled "Fu Hua"'s little head.

"Old Timer, how are you this strong?"

"Fu Hua" turned her head and looked at Fu Hua with a puzzled face.

Fu Hua kept smiling at her, but gradually, her smile faded, replaced by a complicated and heavy expression.

"Old Timer?"

"Fu Hua" looked at Fu Hua in confusion as her expression changed.

From those complex eyes, "Fu Hua" instinctively sensed something. She forced a smile and awkwardly joked:

"Uh, how about we call it a day? You look tired too. You should head back soon, otherwise..."

"From the old diary entries, I know about the method of forcefully instilling martial arts memories to teach someone, after all, I've done that before."

"Old Timer, you..."

"But, trying to acquire martial prowess by digesting memories is difficult. Most of the time, the memories will conflict with the recipient's own, and at best, only about one percent of the martial knowledge can actually be transferred."

"To improve the transmission rate, the only method is for the recipient to abandon their own personality and memories, hypnotizing themselves into thinking they are me. Only then could they smoothly accept all those training memories and convert them into their own cultivation."

"In the ideal case, if the recipient, inside and out, truly sees themselves as me, they could almost fully digest all the martial arts memories, transforming them into their own martial skills. But in doing so, they would no longer be themselves—they would become another version of me."

Fu Hua spoke softly, her clear, watery eyes reflecting the gradually changing expression on "Fu Hua"'s face.

"Fu Hua" sat down, scratching her head, trying to act calm.

"Why are you talking about stuff we already know!? Come on, enough with the pointless talk. You should come back quickly! Since you're just a consciousness backup, staying out too long could damage you!"

"Listen to me. Even if the perfect transfer of memories happens, what you get is still not the same as martial skill tempered through real practice.

There will always be a tiny difference. Although outsiders might not notice it, it's there. A little less strength, a little less precision in the flow of qi, a little slower reflexes and perception... If everything is just a little bit off, then when facing true martial arts forged through hard training, the gap becomes glaringly obvious."

Fu Hua sighed, squatting where she was, hugging her knees, looking peacefully and gently at "Fu Hua."

But "Fu Hua"'s face was now somewhat ashen.

"I— I don't want to hear this. If you don't want to come back, then I'm going to bed!"

"You actually understand what I'm saying, don't you? I know you're smart."

"You— you— Argh! I don't want to listen anymore, I'm leaving!"

"You said you have no memory of the time you were asleep for over a month, right? That you don't know why you ended up unconscious for so long? I can give you that missing memory now."

Fu Hua spoke gently, without any tone of coercion, yet she had already cornered "Fu Hua" with nowhere to run.

"Fu Hua" hugged her head tightly, covering her face so no one could see her expression, remaining silent.

In the heavy silence, Fu Hua let out a long sigh.

"Sigh, You're very smart. So, you must have noticed some of the inconsistencies, right? I've been hesitating all this time, but in the end, the truth has to come out. You understand, don't you?"

"—I don't want to hear it. I'm going to sleep!"

"You're already facing the problem. I don't want to force you, but... do you really not want that memory?"

Fu Hua stretched out her hand, holding a golden feather between her fingertips, placing it gently in front of "Fu Hua."

Fu Hua stayed still.

"Fu Hua" also remained motionless, hugging her head, showing no reaction at all.

After a long moment, Fu Hua, unable to bear forcing this straightforward and innocent child, decided to retract the feather and postpone the conversation.

But, "Fu Hua" suddenly reached out and grabbed the feather.

...

"Little Xuan, Ji Xuanyuan, a great battle is about to begin. I need to project my Yang spirit to protect Kiana. Until I return, I'll leave my physical body in your care."

...

"Kiana, Edge of Taixuan... Are you truly ready?"

...

"So this is Kiana’s Blade Mantra? Good! Very good!"

...

"Kevin, Su... It's been a long time. I didn’t expect that we’d meet again in this way."

...

"Hm? My physical body— it ran off on its own???"

...

"What should I do... I’ll observe for now. Even for a Herrscher, decisions mustn't be made lightly."

...

A series of memories, complete and vivid, merged into "Fu Hua"'s mind.

Then, her face turned completely pale, drained of all color.

"Impossible... This can't be..."

"I am Fu Hua... I am Fu Hua..."

"Old Timer... this kind of illusion... this kind of joke... it’s not funny!"

"Fu Hua" spoke tremblingly, forcing out a smile, hoping to hear Fu Hua say, "It’s just a joke."

But Fu Hua only looked at her, reaching out to gently stroke her hair, giving her no such reassurance.

"Fu Hua"'s pupils began to tremble. She suddenly turned her head — and saw Kevin standing at a distance, expressionless, holding the massive greatsword, Judgment of Shamash, in his hand.

That sight was like a dagger, stabbing straight through "Fu Hua"'s sanity.

"You're lying to me... All of you are lying to me... How could I possibly be a Herrscher?! I'm Fu Hua! I fight to defeat the Honkai! I am Fu Hua!!!"

"Fu Hua" clutched her head tightly, her crimson pupils quivering violently. A searing pain and chaotic storm surged within her mind, tearing apart her rationality — as if ripping her soul itself.

"I'm not... I am... I am..."

"Calm down! Don't panic! It's alright! It's alright! Kevin acted on his own — he means no harm..."

Fu Hua rushed forward, hugging "Fu Hua" tightly, trying to stabilize her collapsing emotions.

But the shaking of her identity caused the innate destructive and murderous instincts of a Herrscher to break free, little by little corroding "Fu Hua"'s rational mind.

"You're all lying to me!!!"

BOOM!!!

Black mist erupted from "Fu Hua"'s body amidst her shrill screams.

"Ahhh!!"

Screaming, "Fu Hua" threw a frenzied punch, piercing right through Fu Hua's soulsteel body. The rampant Honkai energy spread like wildfire, tearing Fu Hua's entire form apart.

Looking at her disintegrating, vanishing body, Fu Hua was momentarily stunned. She only managed to give the terrified and panicked "Fu Hua" a faint, bitter smile — and then her physical presence was completely lost.

"Old Timer!!!"

That scene crushed the last remnants of "Fu Hua"'s sanity.

In the distance, Kevin, who had been ready for any sudden developments, furrowed his brows. He instantly crossed the vast space between them and appeared before the stunned, black-mist-shrouded "Fu Hua."

Fortunately, he saw that Fu Hua's consciousness merely rushed back into her physical body, without greater disaster unfolding.

Kevin breathed a quiet sigh of relief. Then, looking at "Fu Hua," who was staring blankly at her own fists, he raised his sword. The searing blade pointed straight at her.

"Friend or foe — choose."

"Ahhh—!!"

The only response Kevin got was a piercing, inhuman shriek.

Then, "Fu Hua" swung her massive sword, cleaving down toward him with the force of a mountain.

BOOM!!!